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ABSTRACT

Education and training for 16- to 19-year-olds have undergone expansion and diversification in the United Kingdom in the 1980s. In the context of high youth unemployment, the introduction by the central government of a host of vocational preparation programs has aimed to delay labor market entry for a significant proportion of 16-year-olds, while attempting to sustain motivation by providing a vocationally relevant curriculum and holding out the prospect of improved job opportunities. An examination of local education authorities (LEAs) in Swindon and Liverpool was conducted, using data from the 16-19 Initiative and related studies, and investigating institutional arrangements and structures for the education of this age group. The study found that in Swindon, the educational scheme has been changed to compulsory schooling for youth aged 11-16, with a college program for the 16- to 19-year-olds who choose to continue. In Liverpool, this reorganization has not taken place. Schools teach 11- to 18-year-olds; those students wishing to pursue vocational studies after the age of 16 usually enter one of the colleges of further eduation. However, in both cities, employment of 16- to 19-year-olds or their continuing education seems to have more to do with the economy than with the educational program. More 16- to 19-year-olds left school for employment in Swindon, and more were employed by age 19 than in Liverpool, where more students stayed in school longer but were unemployed at 19. (Author/KC)

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING 16-19: INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND OUTCOMES IN TWO ENGLISH CITIES

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ABSTRACT

Educational and training provision for 16-19 year olds has undergone expansion and diversification in the United Kingdom in the 1980's. In response to new demands placed upon them, many local education authorities have embarked on review and reorganisation of their institutional structures, with the stated aims of improving access to provision for young adults of all abilities and achieving greater economic effectiveness through rationalisation. In the context of high youth unemployment, the introduction by central governent of a host of vocational preparation schemes has aimed to delay labour market entry for a significant proportion of 16 year olds, while attempting to sustain motivation by providing a vocationally `relevant' curriculum and holding out the prospect of improved job opportunities. This paper examines the proposition that the effectiveness of these initiatives depends as much on ways in which they relate to the broader context of provision and to patterns of occupational and educational selection as it does on their content and quality. Using data from the 16-19 Initiative and linked studies, institutional arrangements and structures for the education of 16-19 year olds year olds in contrasting local education authorities will be compared. Relationships between the structures of provision and patterns of educational and training participation and progression will be explored. Finally, comparisons between the `mixed' model of 16-19 provision as it operates in the UK and the `schooling' models of North America will be discussed, with reference to demographic and employment trends and future policy options.

INTRODUCTION

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in an international analysis of provision for the education of 16-19 year olds, has identified three models which are characteristic of the industralised world.

Dual Model :
where full time schooling is paralleled by a highly developed system of apprenticeship training.

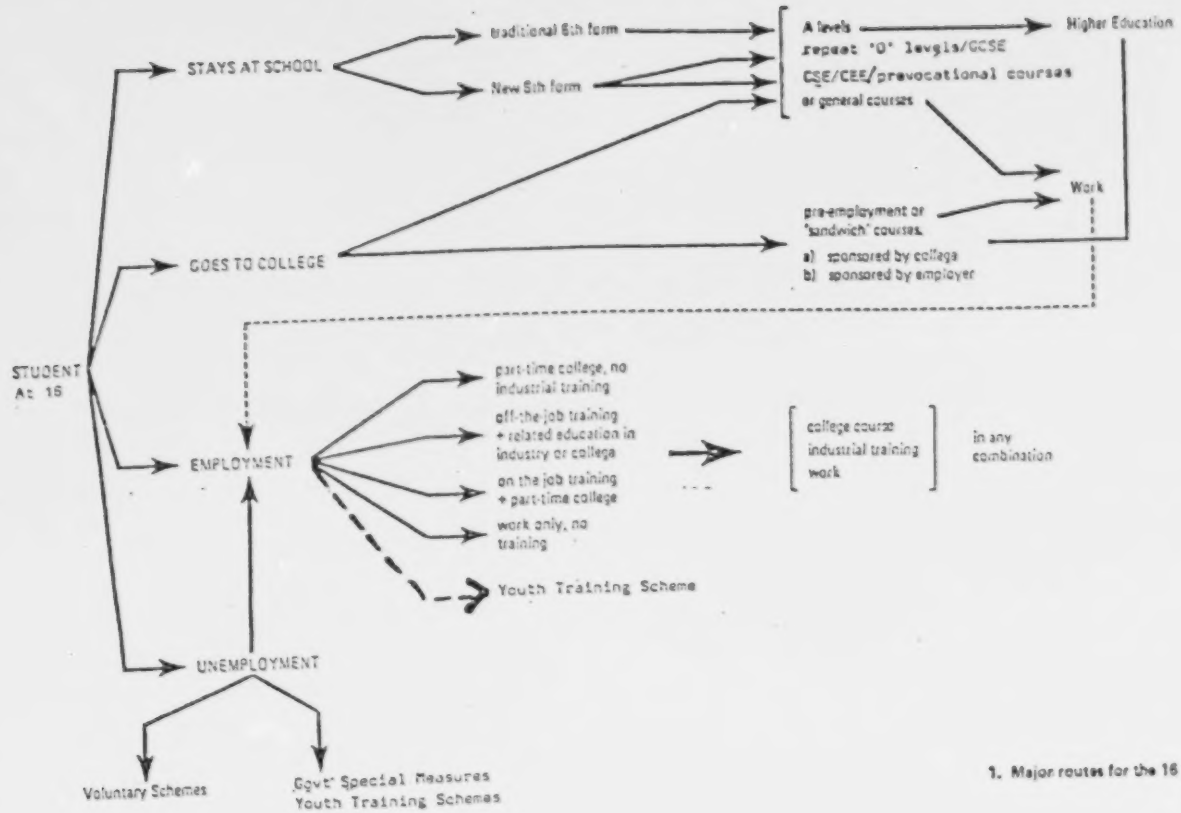
Schooling Model :
where the main emphasis is on full-time schooling up to the age of 18.

Mixed Model :
where previously schools dominated but now less formal types of provision are developing as significant alternatives (OECD,1985)

While the system of education and training in The Federal Republic of Germany is a prime example of the dual model, the United states of America and Japan are commmonly cited as countries committed to the `schooling' model. In such countries, it has been argued, gaining of the High School Diploma at the age of 18 has become a classic `rite of passage'. (Skilbeck et al 1986).

Until recently in the UK, the educational scene for 16-19 year olds has been dominated by formal full-time provision for the more able minority of the young adult population, provided through schools and Colleges of Further Education. The majority of young people in the UK leave full-time education at the age of 16 This is the minimum school leaving age in the UK, marked by sitting of public examinations, now the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Prior to the youth unemployment `explosion' of the 1970's, little further education and training provision was made for 16 year old school leavers most of whom entered directly in full-time work. During the 70's and 80's, the UK has moved towards the OECD `mixed model' of 16-19 provision, as employer led, work-based and community-based forms of training provision have sprung up (with substantial political/financial backing from the Government) in an attempt to bridge the gap between initial education and entry into full employment. Most such schemes for 16-18 year olds are encompassed by the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), a scheme administered nationally by the UK Training Agency of the Department of Employment and locally delivered, largely through employers and other private sector organisations.

Figure 1



1. Major routes for the 16 year old

The same period has seen a steady increase in the population of young people continuing in full-time education after the age of 16. A `staying on' rate of 28.7 per cent in 1973 has increased, nationally, to c47 per cent in 1988. The increase in numbers of young people wanting to stay on in full-time education after the age of 16 has created particular pressures on colleges and schools. Many of those wishing to stay on are those with modest or average academic attainments wishing to postpone labour market entry, rather than those with higher education ambitions.

This has made it necessary for new curricula and qualifications to be devised, as neither the standard highly specialised academic diet of the traditional British `sixth form', nor the alternative of repeating/extending lower level courses were appropriate forms of provision for much of this `new sixth form' population. A variety of forms of `prevocational education' provision emerged, usually programmes of one year's duration combining `core studies' of general application in employment, with some work experience and exposure to specific vocational areas.

In England and Wales, there is a tradition of devolved partnership in the provision of education and training at local level. The delivery of education and training for 16-19 year olds is the responsibility of a multiplicity of agencies and institutions, many of which enjoy considerable autonomy. Included in these, increasingly, are work places where young people receive `work-based' training, often under the arrangements of The Youth Training Scheme (YTS).

The proliferation of schemes and providing agencies (often competing for the available population of young people) makes decision making and progression difficult both for young people and the educators and counsellors who seek to guide them. Recognition of this problem has led to moves towards rationalisation and co-ordination of provision in many Local Education Authorities(LEAs) . Provision in two contrasting cities is outlined here, both to illustrate patterns and diversity in UK provision, and to provide a backcloth to an analysis of routes followed by cohorts of 16-19 year olds making the transition from compulsory schooling in the late 1980s.

The two cities to be considered are:

1) Swindon - an expanding town in the South of England, experiencing the effects of the growth of `new technology' industries in the region.

2) Liverpool - a city built around its port and maritime industries, affected by economic decline since the 1930s.

Education and Training for 16-19 year olds in Swindon

Swindon is a town with a lower-than-average employment rate for the UK. While the growth of the new technology industries has led to an increase in the number of technological jobs in the area, recent studies by the Economic and Social Research Council have suggested that many of the newly created jobs have little to do with technology per se. Substantial job increases have occurred in the Distribution and Catering Sectors, for example. With its expanding employment prospects, the town has been attracting young families from other regions, and has proportionately more young people about to enter the labour market than is the case in the three other areas covered by the 16-19 Initiative. Thamesdown Educational Area is centred on Swindon. In 1985/86, the launch year of the 16-19 Inititiative, there were 23041 fifth formers (equivalent to US Grade 10) in schools in the Swindon area. The fifth formers were experiencing their final year of compulsory schooling, marked by the taking of public examinations (formerly the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level and/or the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) examinations, changed to the single General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in 1987/89).

The Thamesdown educational area adopted, in 1985, a `tertiary system' for the provision of education for 16-19 year olds. In this system, secondary schools previously catering for young people between the ages of 11 and 18 are converted into insitutions providing education up to the end of compulsory schooling only ie 11-16 schools. Those young people wishing to continue their education on a full time basis after the age of 16 feed from these secondary schools into a smaller number of post-16 colleges. In moving towards this model, Swindon reflects a national trend. Reorganisation along `tertiary' lines has occurred in many of the LEAs in England and Wales over the past 15 years, often in response to pressing problems of viability of course and option groups in a system in which a minority of young people continue full time study after the age of 16. The advantages of establishment of the larger scale post-16 colleges are economies of scale, provision of a wider range options and choices, and the more `adult' atomsphere that a post 16 institution can offer. Among the disadvantages are those of reduction of choice in type of institution attended. In practice, local, political, geographical and religious pressures often result in a small number of secondary schools retaining their 16-18 year olds in upper forms, so allowing a degree of choice to those parents and pupils who prefer the more traditional `sixth form' setting.

The Thamesdown area, Swindon, is illustrative of this, in that most 16 year olds in the state system who wish to continue in full time education now proceed to one of the two post-16 colleges. One of these colleges concentrates primarily on courses of an academic or general nature, while the other provides a full range of vocational courses, combining this with academic/general provision. In practice, 3 of the 13 Thamesdown schools have retained their upper forms as a result of local factors.

Turning to the provision made, this falls into 3 types and is again broadly reflective of national trends.

- Academic Advanced Level (`A' level) courses are provided for high academic achievers; a minimum of 2 `A' levels is usually required for entry to higher education.

- Pre-employment (prevocational) courses are provided for those wishing to delay labour market entry for a year while skills and general education levels are improved. These courses have expanded dramatically during the 70s and 80s. In times of high youth unemployment they provide an alternative to the work-based youth training schemes (which often suffer from poor image). They have also been designed to up-grade educational qualifications in ways which appear more relevant and motivating than resitting 5th year examinations in attempts to obtain better grades.

- Vocational courses are offered at a number of levels. Technician level courses (eg BTEC) have a substantial academic component and are now accepted for entry to higher education in some quarters. Craft and equivalent level courses leading to skilled worker occupations are often provided though part-time study; these and other vocational qualifications are sometimes undertaken within Youth Training Scheme provision.

All institutions catering for 16-19 year olds in Swindon provide the academic 'A Level' and the pre-vocational courses. Vocational courses are confined to the Further Education colleges. All colleges offer open access to young people, although specific courses have entry requirements which determine the options open to the student within the college.

At the outset of the 16-19 Initiative 62 YTS schemes were operating in Swindon, offering more than 600 places. Many of these were employer led schemes; some were part of a Local Education Authority Scheme and others were offered through special training centres, (including one Information Technology Centre offering 60 places). Schemes covered all vocational areas, with clerical, retailing and computing occupations heavily represented.

Most of the educational and training options available to 16 year olds in Swindon are encompassed in the provisions outlined.

Liverpool

The City of Liverpool has similarities, reflective of national trends, and some differences reflective of local context. Liverpool has suffered a 64% decline in manufacturing employment, which now accounts for only one in five jobs in the city. In recent years there has been a very substantial increase in long-term umemployment. Within Liverpool, the number of unemployed people has been consistently over 52,000 since the early 1980s. This means that between 20% and 25% of the City's population of working age is seeking employment at any one time. A recent report by Liverpool Educaton Committee (1988) noted that 'in the absence of job opportunities lack of formal work has become a way of life for substantial sections of population'. There are however, some positive features of the local economy including the establishment of a core of modern large scale manufacturing industry seen as offering some potential for stemming the continued decline of this sector. 'White Collar' Services have increased in importance. In particular a growing financial service sector is benefiting from pressures for decentralisation from the South East.

Local colleges provide courses for the unemployed and unwaged - a form of educational provision which has been steadily increasing. A survey by Roberts et al (1987) showed that more than 41% of the city's 17-18 year old who had left fulltime education were employed. There has been a tendency for an increase in part-time employement as a proprtion of the workforce, accompanied by an

increase in female employment.

Demographic data provided by the national Training Agency indicates a decline in the population of Liverpool. The largest decline is expected to be in the 16-19 age group, where there will be a decline of 28.7% by 1992. These changes are expected to reduce demand for full and part-time educational courses and their anticipated effects are being built into educational planning.

The four colleges of Further Education have clear vocational specialisations. In contrast with Swindon, tertiary reorganisation has not taken place. Schools, many of which are designated `Community Comprehensives', cater for all ages from 11 to 18. Students wishing to pursue vocational studies after the ages of 16 generally enter one of the four Colleges of Further Education.

One college has provision in art, design and printing; catering and hairdressing; clothing and furniture design and production. A second college provides the centre for business, office and secretarial studies, combining this with specialisms in engineering and sciences, including para medical sciences. Of the other two colleges, one specialises in construction, motor vechicle engineering and transport; the other in a mixed provison of caring and health studies, performing arts and electrical engineering.

As well as their own occupational specialisations all colleges provide prevocational and general education courses, as do the school sixth form college. There are consortium arrangements with local schools and all colleges have established school link programmes. In particular, each college operates consortia for the delivery of one year prevocational education programmes, which cover 30 local schools. The Education Authority also offers 550 places on the Youth Training Scheme, a form of prevision complemented by a range of employer led schemes and special trainng workshops. As in other contracting labour market areas, additional financial incentives have been offered to firms to employ and train young people. For example, all the Authority's Youth Training Scheme programmes provide substantial subsidies to employers for the wages of young people who graduate from being a youth `trainee' to achieving employee status.

DATA SOURCES

The analysis which follows draws on the core data of the `16-19 Initiative', supplemented by interview and documentary material supplied by local providers of education and training. The core study involves questionnaire survey of up to 1500 young people in two cohorts (aged 15-16 and 17-18 in 1987). These cohorts are followed up for two years in each of four contrasting labour market areas, including Swindon and Liverpool.

The design involves collection of data by postal questionnaire at annual intervals, starting in 1987, supplemented by interviews of subsamples.

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 questionnaires have now been completed and the data sets merged. The results which follow represent some initial analyses of data from the Swindon and Liverpool samples.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATES: OLDER COHORT (aged 17-18 in 1987)

	Obtained base	Completed questionnaires 1987	1988
SWINDON	695	559 (80%)	347 (50%)
LIVERPOOL	649	491 (76%)	312 (48%) excludes `boost sample'

PATHWAYS AT 16

Data from the ESRC Initiative `older cohort' sample enables pathways followed at age 16 to be examined.

Respondents gave a record of educational/occupational status at each of 12 three-month intervals, from April to June 1985 to the time of the Survey (April 1987). Main positions in the period October to December 1985 (ie during the term following the end of compulsory schooling) are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1 : Positions of respondents in Oct-Dec 1985 (at 16 years)

		Full-time Education	YTS	Full-time job	Part-time job	Unemployed	Other
Swindon (N=532)	(%)	45	18	28	5	3	1
Liverpool (N=475)	(%)	47	34	8	2	9	-

The problem with establishing positions in any given 3 monthly period is that these incorporate transient positions held, which may obscure the main patterns of progression.

The concept and construction of the career `trajectories' has already been introduced in John Gray's paper. The following analysis uses 5 categories of 'career trajectory' as

identified from the 16-19 Initiative older cohort data set, based on major patterns of occupational and educational experience following the end of compulsory schooling.

* Academic education
* Other Full-time education (prevocational/vocational)
* School to Work (direct entry to work at age 16)
* School to Youth Training Scheme to Work (2 step transition)
* Unemployment/continued work experience in special training schemes (track appearing to lead towards unemployment or underemployment)

The distribution of the Liverpool and Swindon older cohort respondents between these trajectories is given in Table 2.

TABLE 2 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN CAREER TRAJECTORIES

	Swindon %	Liverpool %
Academic Education	20.5	19.0
Other Full-time Education	20.5	19.7
Education to Work	31.0	11.3
Education to YTS to Work	11.6	10.8
Unemployment/Special Schemes/Underemployment	16.5	39.2
TOTAL (100%)	518	444

The most notable difference lies in the proportion of young people entering directly into employment at age 16. In Swindon, this proportion, at 31 per cent, compared with Liverpool's 11 per cent, reflect the contrasting contexts of the expanding and the stagnant labour markets. Interviews with the local Career officers and programme coordinators in Swindon's post-16 educational institutions have assisted in interpretation of the high direct job entry figure. The assessment of current and projected labour requirements against the (national) demographic trends of a decreasing population of young adults available for work appears to have stimulated local employers to engage in active recruitment in the local schools. `Active recruitment' strategies include offering incentives of apparently attractive wages and schemes to 16 year olds, presumably with a view to shaping the young person to meet the firms' specific

requirements. (Employers' perspectives on this issue are being sought at present - but it should be noted that the literature is littered with historical evidence on the same phenomenon ocurring in times of full employment, in the UK, with little benefit of systematic or generalisable training accruing to the young people so recruited. The present study should eventually reveal the extent of training in employment actually received by young people following this route). College and careers staff report difficulties in convincing many young people of the benefits of securing a broader foundation of education and training in the face of the short term attractions of relatively high earnings and `worker' status.

In Liverpool, by contrast, high youth and adult unemployment still dominates the scene. Demographic trends towards a smaller population of young adults will serve to erode high levels of unemployment before significantly affecting employers' capacities to recruit.

Comparison of the figures for entry to the Youth Training Scheme suggests that the counterparts of young people entering directly into jobs in Swindon are those going into Youth Training Schemes in Liverpool. 1988 Careers Office statistics for Swindon suggest continuation of the trend in that entry to YTS is now at minimal levels with direct entry to employment running very high.

A national upgrading of the Youth Training Scheme which took place in 1986 was intended, according to Government policy statements, to establish the scheme as a quality foundation training scheme providing a `permanent bridge' from school to work (Department of Education and Science/Department of Employment). The phenomenon in Swindon (apparently reflected in other Southern authorities) suggests that for young people (and for their employers) YTS remains a `stop-gap' or `fall-back' provision in the absence of real jobs. Neither YTS provision nor demand is sustained when entry to work (with or without training) is available, it appears. (Times Educational Supplement, February 1989).

Reduction in YTS entry combined with relative stabilty in full-time education entry figures suggests that, in an expanding labour market context, those who do choose to delay job entry while improving qualifications will choose full-time education courses rather than YTS. Those with employment difficulties will tend to gravitate towards YTS. Do the YTS schemes end up as cul-de-sacs for unemployable numbers of young people, distanced further and further from their peers, in an expanding market context? The characteristices of the YTS and education - based, employment orientated sub-samples will be discussed later in this analysis.

INSTITUTIONAL LOCATIONS

In both Swindon and Liverpool, young people continuing in full-time education beyond the age of 16 may continue their studies in a sixth form college or school sixth form (with an emphasis on academic and general education) or in a College of Further Education (where the emphasis is on vocational courses, but a wide range of academic/general studies is usually available).

Swindon's move towards a concentration of 16-19 year olds in post-16 colleges is reflected in the sample as shown in Table 3. By contrast, in Liverpool's mixed system (with its strong traditional schools sector) students in full-time education were distributed almost equally (52 per cent : 48 per cent) between post-16 colleges and school sixth forms, at ages 17/18.

From Table 1 it can be seen that overall staying on rates in full-time education are comparable in Swindon and Liverpool, despite the differences in organisational arrangements. It is sometimes argued that the adult environment and wider range of options typically available in post-16 colleges is an incentive to 'staying on' in full-time education. On this criterion alone, one might expect Swindon staying on rates to be higher, but no such effect is suggested by comparison of the Swindon and Liverpool figures. The preceding analysis showed that other factors linked with local labour market conditions are in play here.

TABLE 3 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN TYPE OF INSTITUTION ATTENDED BY FULLTIME STUDENTS AT 17/18 YEARS

Institutions attended	Swindon	Liverpool
School	15	48
Sixth Form College	44	31
Further Education College	41	21
TOTAL (100%)	241	214

PROGRESSION

Administration of the second questionnaire at 3 years after minimum school learning age enabled positions in April 1988 to be cross tabluated with initial career trajectory identified at April 1987. The results are given in Tables 4,5,6,7 and 8.

TABLE 4 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATIONS OF `ACADEMIC TRACK' RESPONDENTS AT 18/19

Position at April 1988	Swindon %	Liverpool %
Progression to University/Poly-technic	28	38
Progression to job	51	18
Remaining in (non-advanced) school/college setting	13	32
Unemployed	1	8
Other	6	4
TOTAL (100%)	83	68

It is to be expected that labour market context will fundamentaly affect young people's patterns of participation in employment related schemes. A significant impact on young people following the academic trajectory is suggested here, and in interview and other contextual data. The lower level of entry to higher education among young people in the Swindon sample is notable. 38 per cent of Liverpool young people engaged on the academic route were in University or Polytechnic at April 1988. Only 28 per cent of their Swindon counterparts were so placed, while more than half of the Swindon cohort had progressed from the academic trajectory into full-time employment. Some explanatory factors indicated by interview were:

- the increasing practice of local employers in providing incentives to academically able young people to enter `career' training schemes in Swindon. Banking, insurance and management schemes in retail were cited as examples. This was seen as reflecting the value that employers continue to place on the `gold standard' academic qualifications, despite substantial Government investment in vocational alternatives to the academic track.

- the combined effects of reluctance of young people in

Swindon to move far from their home town, and the lack of HE institutions in the immediate locality.

In Liverpool a total of 71 per cent of young people on the academic route were either in higher education or continuing in non-advanced college education with only 18 per cent progressing to full-time employment. Again this appears to reflect the lack of local employment opportunities. Greater accessibility of higher education provision Liverpool and greater preparedness to move out from Liverpool may also be factors here.

Progression from the `other' full-time education track

Comparison of percentages progressing to employment again reflects the local job context. Progression into part-time work appears to be a feature of the Liverpool scene with almost 3 times as many respondents as in Swindon. Overall numbers of those progressing to some form of employment are broadly comparable (77 per cent against 72 per cent) at this stage.

Progression to Higher Education from the other full-time education trajectory is an interesting phenomenon, possibly reflecting the beginnings of greater flexiblity in access to higher education in the UK, as demographic trends reduce the numbers of available young adult entrants!

Those continuing in non-advanced college education after 3 years tend to be concentrated in Liverpool, and could be marking time given differential unemployment rates in Swindon/Liverpool.

This route contains young people who are following the recently developed pre-employment courses designed to develop a vocational focus and employment-related skills. Context rather than vocational skill again dictates actual employment outcome. Providers have observed that those who take the opportunity to add to their standard academic qualifications will tend to be in greater relative demand with local employers whatever the context. Academic performance as a second major determinant of employment outcomes is discussed in a later section.

TABLE 5 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATIONS OF `PRE-VOCATIONAL (OTHER) EDUCATIONAL TRACK `RESPONDENTS AT 18/19.

Position at April 1988	Swindon %		Liverpool %	
Progression to full-time job	71	77	55	72
Progression to part-time job	6		17	
Progression to HE	10		nil	
Out of Work	3		15	
Remaining in full-time (non-advanced) education	8		12	
Other	2		1	
TOTAL (100%)	72		65	

Progression of those outside full-time education.

Swindon respondents who had moved directly into jobs from school were more likely to have retained their jobs than their Liverpool counterparts (Table 6). Similarly, those following the `training scheme to work' route were more likely to have retained their jobs in Swindon (Table 7). Of those in the unemployment/training trajectory, almost twice as many had succeeded eventually in gaining full-time employment in the expanding labour market of Swindon. Again, a significantly higher population (one third) of Liverpool respondents were in part-time work at 18/19 (Table 8).

TABLE 6 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATIONS OF DIRECT SCHOOL-WORK RESPONDENTS, AT 18/19

Position at April 1988

	Swindon %	Liverpool %
Remained in full-time work	88	79
Out of Work	7	17
Return to full-time college study	3	4
Other	2	4
TOTAL (100%)	183	29

TABLE 7 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATIONS OF 'EDUCATION TO YTS WORK' RESPONDENTS AT 18/19

Position at April 1988

	Swindon %	Liverpool %
In full-time work	100	86
Out of Work	nil	10
Other	nil	4
TOTAL (100%)	39	29

TABLE 8 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN DESTINATIONS OF 'UNEMPLOYMENT/TRAINING' RESPONDENTS, AT 18/19

Position at April 1988

	Swindon %	Liverpool %
In full-time job	72	40
In part-time job	8	33
Still unemployed	12	9
Return to Full-time Study	2	6
Other	6	10
TOTAL (100%)	58	121

THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

It has been argued that previous educational attainment is a second major determinant of route and outcome in the labour market. Academic performance scores were computed by awarding points for grades obtained in GCE/CSE examinations at age 16+.

Analysis of academic perfomance scores at 16+ in all 3 English areas showed that the respondents in the Swindon sample were significantly more successful in public examinations at 16+ than the Liverpool respondents. Further analysis, beyond the scope of this paper, indicate that this reflects the differences in social class composition of the two areas (Roberts et al 1988).

TABLE 9

	Academic Perfomance Mean Score
Swindon	25.59
Liverpool	21.06
(Sheffield	23.08)

Area difference F (2,15,76) 9.49; p=0.0001

A basic analysis of variance in educational performance by career trajectory was performed for the all English samples, showing a clear relationshp between academic performance at 16+ and trajectory, as in Table 10.

TABLE 10 : CAREER TRAJECTORY DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Trajectory		Academic Performance Mean Score
1	Academic education	43.08
2	Other full-time education	28.04
3	School/YTS-Work	19.70
4	School-Work	18.65
5	YTS/Unemployment	13.19

F(4,15,74) 290.9 P ~ 0
42.5% variance accounted for. Significant differences given by Scheffe test between all groups except 3 and 4.

Thus attainment at 16 is shown to be a major determinant of the pathway followed subsequently. Examination of the interaction between educational performance at age 16, pathways followed, and destinations reached by 17/18 yields some further insights. As expected Table 11 shows that the majority of young people in the top attainment range followed one of the educational trajectories in both geographical areas. While schools and colleges clearly tend to hold the better qualified young people in the educational trajectories, it is of interest that only 33 per cent of the avarage Swindon respondents continued in full-time education, the remainder choosing to take their chance in the labour market - with short-term positive outcomes in many cases, in the sense that most obtained direct entry to full-time employment. In Liverpool, by contrast, the average educational attainer was much more likely to remain in full-time education, the alternative being YTS rather than direct work entry.

In the absence of good job prospects, it appears the averagely qualified will tend to continue in education rather than enter the Youth Training Scheme. However it can be seen from Table 11 that, in each attainment band, YTS appeared to offer at least as good prospects of employment as the `other (vocational) full-time education' route. Again, the attainment at age 16 and state of the local job market appear to be principal determinants of pathways and prospects at age 18/19.

Table 11 also shows that the majority of unqualified respondents in Swindon had found full-time employment by age 18/19 despite their lack of attainment (82 per cent). All but two of the `unqualified' had disengaged from all forms of full-time education at the earliest opportunity; whether this involved lack of access or unwillingness to continue in a system which had yielded so little in the way of tangible results by age 16 is unclear - and may be explained by the interview data (as yet not analysed). Among the unqualified in Liverpool, however, 50 per cent were still out of work at age 18/19.

The wide ranging nature of provision available in the `other full-time education' route is reflected in the attainment profiles of the participants:

TABLE 12 : PARTICIPANTS IN `OTHER FULL-TIME EDUCATION' BY ATTAINMENT LEVEL

	Attainment Level	Swindon %	Liverpool %
1	Unqualified (Zero Score)	3	7
2	Low qualification level (1-18 score)	18	13
3	Average qualification level (19-36 score)	43	54
4	High qualification level (37+ score)	35	26
	TOTAL (100%)	72	61

While peak participation falls in the average attainment band, significant numbers of both high and lower attainers entered programmes in this catergory. Provision tends to be tailored by schools and colleges to meet perceived local demand.

TABLE 11 : AREA DIFFERENCES IN PROGRESSION BY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SWINDON

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 1: UNQUALIFIED (ZERO SCORE) AT 16+

DESTINATION:	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time Other Ed	1			1	
Ed to Work	3			14	
YTS to Work				8	
YTS & Unemployment	2			8	1
	6			31	1
N=38	(16%)			(82%)	(3%)

SWINDON

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 2: (LOW EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time Acad Ed	1		1		
Full-time other ed	1		1	11	
Ed to Work	2			25	
YTS to Work				12	
YTS & Unemployment				8	2
	3		1	56	2
N=65	(5%)			(86%)	(3%)

SWINDON

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 3: (AVERAGE EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time ac Ed		1	5	5	1
Other Full-time ed		3	1	24	3
Ed to Work	2	1		40	2
YTS to Work				16	
YTS & Unemployment	1			16	1
	3	5	2	101	7
N=118			(21%)	(86%)	(6%)

SWINDON

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 4: (HIGH EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time ac Ed	1	10	22	38	2*
Other Full-time ed		3	5	15	2
Ed to Work		2		12	
YTS to Work				3	
YTS & Unemployment		1		4	
	1	16	27	72	4
N=120		(13%)	(23%)	(60%)	(3%)

LIVERPOOL

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 1: UNQUALIFIED (ZERO SCORE) AT 16+

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time Other Ed	2			2	
Ed to Work	1			3	
YTS to Work	2			1	
YTS & Unemployment	17(2)			10	4
	22	2		16	4
N=44	(50%)	(5%)		(36%)	(9%)

LIVERPOOL

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 2: (LOW EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time Acad Ed	1				
Full-time other ed	2	1		5	
Ed to Work	4			6	
YTS to Work	1			10	
YTS & Unemployment	16(+1)	2		17	4
	24	3		38	5
N=71	(34%)			(54%)	(7%)

LIVERPOOL

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL 3: (AVERAGE EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time ac Ed	3	9	2	3	
Other Full-time ed	5	5	1	20	2
Ed to Work			9	1	1
YTS to Work				12	
YTS & Unemployment	6	2	2	17	2
	14	6	10	61	5
N=101	(14%)	(6%)	(10%)	(60%)	(5%)

LIVERPOOL

EDUCATION PERFORMANCE LEVEL 4: (HIGH EXAMINATION ATTAINMENT)

DESTINATION	Out of Work	Full-time Education	HE	Full-time Job	Part-time Job
Trajectory					
Full-time ac Ed	2	11	24	9	1
Other Full-time ed	1(+1)	2	3	9	
Ed to Work				5	
YTS to Work				2	
YTS & Unemployment	-1	1		4	1
	4	14	27	29	2
N=77		(18%)	(35%)	(38%)	

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GENERAL DISCUSSION

We have seen that educational and training provision for 16-19 year olds has undergone expansion and diversification in the UK in the 1980s. Most educational reforms respond to the opportunities for change created by broader economic and social problems. In the case of UK problems of youth unemployement have dominated the 1980s, creating the conditions for proliferation of vocational preparation schemes designed to delay market entry for a significant number of 16 year olds, while attempting to sustain motivation by providing a vocationally `relevant' curriculum and holding out the prospect of improved job opportunities. In the early 1980s, many of the schemes were the subject of widespread criticism, often characterised as hastily introduced, `stop gap' measures with little evidence of any serious attention to curriculum development. The twin objectives of improvement of quality of new courses and schemes, and of public confidence in them, have been pursued with vigour in the latter part of the 1980s, and many education and training `radicals' have found within the new (non-academic) programmes long sought opportunities to innovate without the constraints and rigidities of the formal examination structure and age-graded curriculm. While the schemes and courses continue to be variable in quality, there is little doubt that some of the best in educational practice, as informed by recent research and development, can be found in these new initiatives, and their proponents are seeking to establish these forms of provision as relevant alternatives for young people of all abilities.

It is here that the problems of context are thrown into sharp relief, given the selective function of education and its relation to the labour market. Courses and schemes initially designed for the lower rungs of the academic attainment ladder often become labelled as such. However good the quality and relevance of the education and training delivered, able young people will tend not to value them. Despite calls for greater relevance in education, at the point of selection there is ample evidence that employers continue to seek the `gold standard' academic qualifications. Academic attainments at 16- are seen as signalling the general ability and motivation that employers seek. Recruitment practices among employers (as well as parental attitudes to the `gold standard' academic qualifications) lead young people to choose the highest status academic courses available/open to them in preference to vocationally `relevant' courses (which provide infill for the average and less able) and Youth Training Shemes. David Raffe had developed this `vicious circle' argument more fully elsewhere. (Raffe 1985)

This phenomenon is suggested by the findings in the contrasting local education authorities outlined in this paper. Both the young people's first `career' steps at 16 and their later destinations are seen to be heavily influenced by general academic attainments at age 16.

Institutional structuring appears to have less significance (in terms of the actual configuration of providing agencies) for staying on rates or patterns of participation, although the stronger higher education links in Liverpool may be reflected in the higher progression to HE rate, and barriers to re-entry to full-time non-advanced education in the minimal return rate. The low impact of institutional structuring is, perhaps, reflective of the moves towards inter-institutional co-operation and 'consortium' (shared planning and teaching) arrangements which are taking place in most education authorities, and which certainly apply in the two authorities considered here.

Possibilty of most interest is the phenomenon in Swindon, in which improved economic prospects appear to be producing a retrenchment to the traditional patterns of education participation of the pre 1980s. High direct entry to work (with or without training) at age 16 appears to be coupled with increasing demand for academic courses in post-compulsory education for those who choose to stay, in recognition of employers recruitment preferences and practices. Also of interest is the apparent threat of a 'tail-end' (or underclass) of young people outside the formal employment and educational structures, at risk of becoming further and further isolated from their peers as improved and expanded oppportunities allow the latter to advance. Follow up study of this subgroup is of particular interest.

POLICY OPTIONS

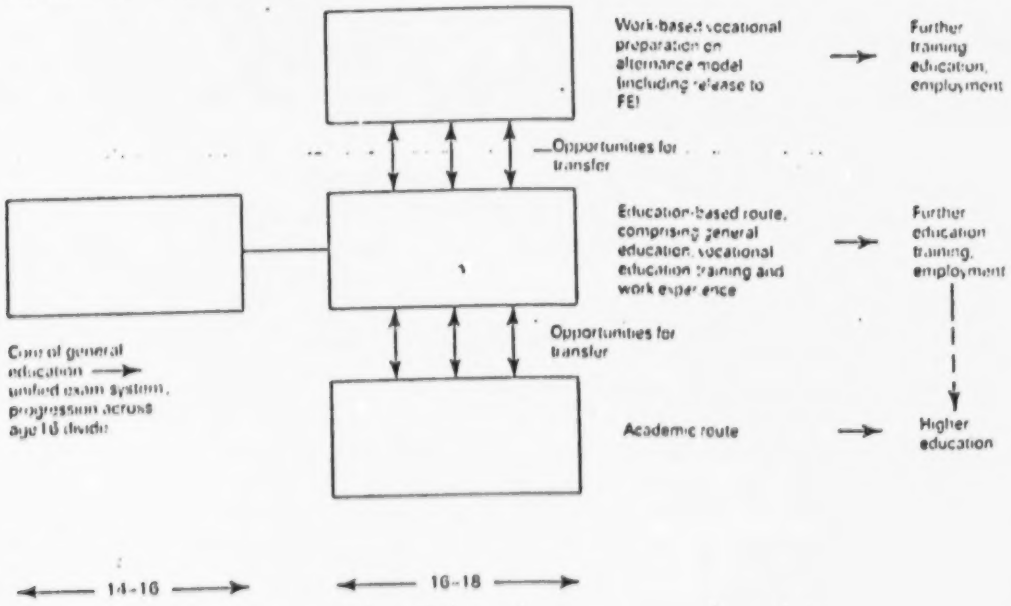
There is strong pressure, now, for the existing programmes to be integrated into a more coherent framework of education and training for 14-18 year olds. (Evans and Watts, 1985) Before considering alternative models for such co-ordination, however, three fundamental questions need to be addresses.

The question of the purposes of such co-ordination needs to be posed, since these purposes will necessarily shape the models adopted. Co-ordination undertaken primarily for administrative convenience at institutional or local-authority level may require models different from those required for the purposes of maximising young people's opportunities for informed choice, progression and transfer. In general, those calling for co-ordination have articulated the central purposes which must be served by the resulting framework as being: that it must present a comprehensive and understandable set of choices to young people; that it must afford pathways which enable young peole to progress to opportunities in further, higher and adult education, training, and employment, and to transfer between routes according to need and circumstance; and that it must secure recognition and status for vocational and pre-vocational studies, and widen access for young people to credible and recognised certification.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS

What, then, are the alternative models which could be explored, for all young people? Some options suggested by current developments and thinking are outlined below, together with some of the issues they raise. A key question is whether 14-18 educaton should be planned in two parts - 14-16 and 16-18 - or whether planning should treat the 14-18 age-group as a unitary whole. This suggests two possible models: a `2 - 2' model, as outined in Figure 2; or a continuous four-year model, as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 2: The '2 + 2' model


Work-based vocational preparation on alternance model (including release to FE)
Further training education, employment
Opportunities for transfer
Education-based route, comprising general education, vocational education training and work experience
Further education training, employment
Opportunities for transfer
Core of general education
unified exam system, progression across age 16 divide
Academic route
Higher education
14-16
16-18

A break at 16 is neither good nor bad per se. Its appropriateness is determined by the availability of coherent and comprehensive opportunities for progression across the 16-year-old-divide. David Raffe notes that this is the strongest argument for a single examination framework to cover the whole age group at 16, since it is hard to plan coherent provision at 16-18 if students enter it from an incoherent patchwork of courses at 14-16. The model suggested, then, is one in which the 14-16 period is devoted to general education, with a common examination framework at 16-. Then 16-18 period might then divide into:

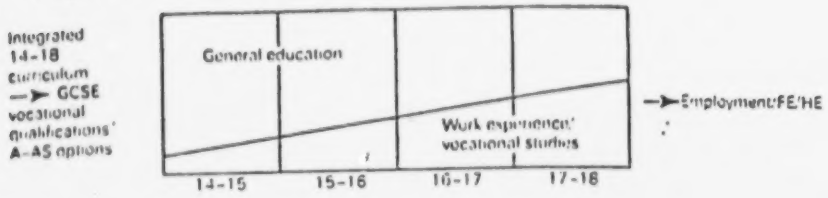
(a) a work-based route to a qualified worker status (the MSC `traineeship'?) involving substantial educational release;

(b) an education-based route, incorporating general and vocational education, with substantial work experience and

on-job training, leading to vocational qualifications;

(c) an education-based academic route, leading directly into full-time higher education.

Figure 3: The four-year model



We now turn to the second model, the all-through 14-18 model. This model is centered on the notion of a four-year education-based curriculum as the norm for 14-18-year-olds: an integrated programme of work experience, vocational and general education available to all young people. A central purpose is raising the de facto educational leaving age by creating a more relevant and attractive curriculum for 14-18s. The four-year package has the advantage of encouraging young people to complete the full programme, thereby making it possible to keep options open and to endure access to qualifications for a wider range of young people. A disadvantage is that leaving the scheme at 16 or 17 can be interpreted as `dropping out', thereby relegating to second-class status those whose interests and motivations lie elsewhere. Increasing emphasis on work experience and vocational elements could enable young people to leave the scheme with recognised vocational qualifications. How far does the introduction of pre-vocational and vocational elements pre-16 interfere with the principle of breadth and balance in initial education, and how far might it enhance this principle, by extending awareness and experience? These are some of the issues surrounding the all-through model.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are deeply rooted cultural divisions between education, training and working life in the UK, supported by a `sense of superiority of the theoretical over the applied, the disciples of knowledge over fields of practice'. (Skilbeck et al 1985). Starting with three crude OECD models of provision of 16-19 education and training, it was noted that the UK has moved in recent years from limited application of the `schooling model' (for the academically able) towards a `mixed model'. This shift has involved the setting up of work-based schemes outside (and often competing with) the education structures - an apparently contradictory move in the context of Governent rhetoric about bridge building between the worlds of education, training and work.

For the UK to move towards a 'reformed schooling' model as outlined above would both build on experience gained and bring the nation more into line with the schooling models of its industrial counterparts, particularly in North America. All students could, within the educational structures of schooling or further education, select vocational options to study in conjunction with the common track of general education, with work experience and co-operative arrangements with employers playing a significant part. Given demographic trends, such a strategy is feasible (as capacity exists within the existing educational instututions) and could provide a stronger foundation for eroding some of the culturally embedded divisions between education, training and the world of work.

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